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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Ivory Coast -
Secretary Rice's Speech on Transformational Diplomacy -

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Iran

PARIS - Thursday, January 19, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Ivory Coast
Secretary Rice's Speech on Transformational Diplomacy

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Iran

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Violence in the Ivory Coast is today's top international story. In U.S. news, Secretary Rice's speech at Georgetown receives praise in right-of-center Le Figaro and left-of-center Le Monde as well as Catholic La Croix note the Supreme Court's decision to strike down an effort launched by former attorney-general John Ashcroft to scuttle Oregon's assisted-suicide law.

Left-of-center Liberation and Le Monde both report on Human Rights Watch's criticisms of the U.S. for supporting cruel and degrading treatment of prisoners and other violations that have tarnished its human rights leadership. Le Monde calls the HRW report an "indictment against Washington." Liberation notes HRW's charge that: "the void created by the U.S.'s retreat with regard to human rights could have been filled by Europe. but it has proved to be incapable of doing so."

"The UN is Caught in a Trap in Cote d'Ivoire" leads Le Figaro this morning. For Le Monde: "The International Community is Looking to Sanction Laurent Gbagbo" and La Croix's headline: "The Ivory Coast Defies the UN." Commentary tends to agree that the UN's credibility in Africa is on the line in this new clash with the Ivory Coast. (See Part C)

Le Figaro's front page announces: "A Diplomatic Change of Course in the U.S." following Secretary Rice's Speech at Georgetown University on 'transformational diplomacy.' (See Part C)

"Europe Refuses to Negotiate With Iran" reports Le Figaro: "The EU 3 is out of patience and considers that its interlocutors in Teheran are insincere. Nothing today seems to be able to undermine the Europeans' determination to transfer the issue to the UNSC. and the United States, which strongly supports the European initiative, is ready to do without the blessing of China and Russia." Alexander Adler in Le Figaro pens an op-ed outlining "The Scenario for the Inevitable Fall of Ahmadinejad." (See Part C)

Prime Minister de Villepin's trip to Germany is widely reported today and Le Monde's editorial focuses on Angela Merkel's foreign policy stance. For its part Le Figaro calls Merkel's diplomacy "a widely popular revolution." Le Monde's editorial remarks: "Ms Merkel brought up the issue of Guantanamo when she met with George Bush during her first official visit to Washington, something no French leader has done. The days of the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis that was created in 2003 following the conflict in Iraq appear to be over and the "Merkel tone" suggests a diplomatic attitude that France would do well to copy."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Ivory Coast

"Caught Red-Handed"

Francois Ernwein editorializes in Catholic La Croix (01/19): "This uprising in the Ivory Coast would like to be able to justify itself on the basis of what it sees as foreign interference in the country. In reality it is merely the umpteenth time that the head of state has tried to manipulate the people in order to stay in power in contempt of the

commitments made during the Marcoussis Accord in 2003. [Gbagbo's] politics are founded on the repeated refusal to respect the terms of UN Resolution 1633 that calls for power sharing between Gbagbo and his supporters and the opposition in the northern part of the country. But today Gbagbo is up against the international community and facing a powerful retort. In Paris at the Defense Ministry and in New York at the UN the reactions to the situation in the Ivory Coast have been intense. Made all the more so by the fact that in the last few days the forces that are in place to ensure that the Marcoussis agreements are upheld have been targeted. The international community will not turn away and a tool exists [to pressure Gbagbo] sanctions."

"In Favor of Sanctions for the Ivory Coast" Right-of-center Le Figaro's editorial calls for UN sanctions on the Ivory Coast. Pierre Roussel writes (01/19): "Considering the legal void in which the Ivory Coast has placed itself, the UN's authority must be imposed especially as this authority is being exercised in consultation with the Ivory Coast and other African partners. Let us not forget that the objective is not to redistribute power but to finally plan for democratic elections and to disarm the belligerents. Beyond the Ivory Coast, it is the UN's credibility on the African continent that is at stake especially considering the difficulties it had in Rwanda, Congo, Eritrea and Sudan. If it is resolutely committed to doing so, the UN can help France get out of this sterile confrontation -- propagated by Ivorian extremists -- with its former colony."

Secretary Rice's Speech on Transformational Diplomacy

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"Condi Rice Wants to Change the World Gently." Washington correspondent for right-of-center Le Figaro, Philippe Gelie, writes (01/19): "Condoleezza Rice has found more subtle ways than war to change the world. In a speech that marks a distinct shift from the doctrine of unilateral action and preventive strikes, the Secretary of State outlined yesterday the major tenets of her 'transformational diplomacy' in front of a group of students at Georgetown University. This ambitious change in direction is taking place at a crucial turning point in the U.S.'s strategic planning. The National Security Council. will be making public next month the new "National Security Strategy" that will replace the doctrine previously drafted by Condoleezza Rice in 2002. After September 11, 2001 the priority was on preventive action to respond to the threat of terrorism. via the formation of ad hoc coalitions or unilateral action. The new direction, as set out by the head of the NSC Stephen Hadley, will put the accent on democratization and methods to help countries that are on the verge of collapse. Beyond preventing conflicts, Condoleezza Rice also intends to regain control of managing post-war situations. At the close of 2005 George Bush asked her to take charge of the Bureau of Reconstruction and Stabilization and Congress ordered that the Pentagon hand over 100 million dollars to the State Department to this end. Condi Rice's move to the front lines on these issues confirms her dominant position in American politics. With a 63% approval rating in the polls she is the undisputed star of the second Bush Administration. This allows her to hold her own and mark her independence at the head of the State Department. She has succeeded in renewing the ties of the transatlantic relationship, in working with France and the UN on the Lebanese and Syrian situation, she was able to broker an agreement with Israel concerning the southern border of Gaza and she has been able to soften negotiations with North Korea and find a consensus with Iran. The Republicans, who are searching for the ideal candidate for 2008, regularly put forward her name in spite of her repeated refusals."

Iran

"The Scenario for the Inevitable Fall of Ahmadinejad." The op-ed by Alexander Alder in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/19): "There is no mystery behind the extremely serious and tense situation in Teheran right now. The new president Ahmadinejad has deliberately done away with all of the safeguards that were put in place by his predecessors to avoid Iran's lapsing into a level of international isolation like it has known in the 1980s. But the Iranian leader's most recent gesticulations are not merely the product of blind fanaticism. there is a definite strategy behind his politics. to halt once and for all what [Ahmadinejad and his supporters] see as the continual and fatal drift of post-revolutionary Iran toward a de facto alliance with the U.S.. The real battle concerning Teheran today, however, is no longer with the west - it is determined by the strength of the historic ties that bind Iran to its most steadfast partners Russia, China, Syria and India. It is time for Washington to send the necessary signals to Moscow and Beijing. so that they do everything in their power to enable reason to triumph. To absurdly punish the Iranian people. through sanctions is not the right way. STAPLETON